

# **Peebles Street Access Audit (1): Central Peebles**

## **Tweeddale Access Panel**

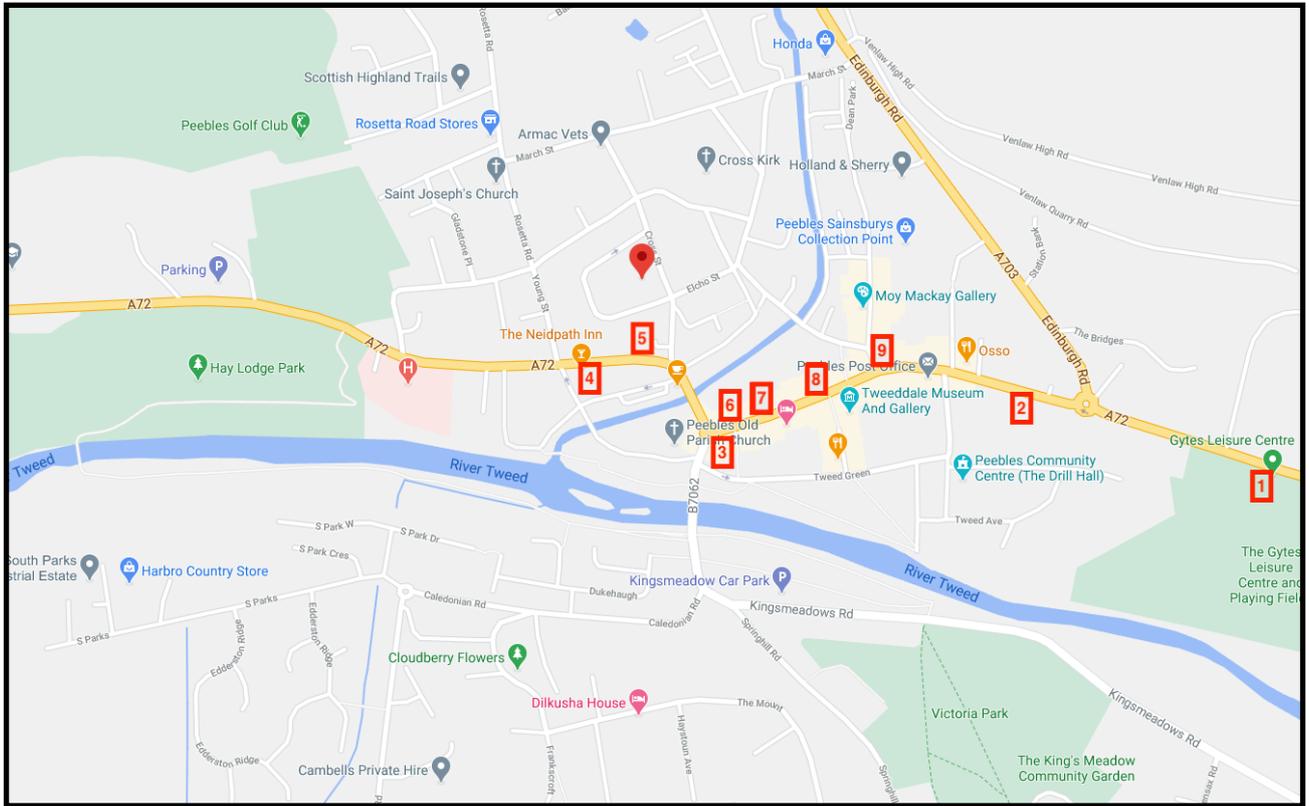
**November 2020**

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# 1. Introduction

This is a street access audit of the main east-west route through Peebles town centre, along the A72 from the Gytes Leisure Centre in the east to the Hay Lodge health centre in the west. It was carried out by representatives of Tweeddale Access Panel, and David Hunter (Not for Profit Planning) in September and October 2020.



## 2. Observations

### From Gytes Leisure centre via steps to A72 (south side)

The steps from the Leisure Centre to the main road are muddy and slippery. The handrails aren't continuous at the top and would be better if continued to the wall (picture 1).

### West along Eastgate and High Street

The pavement is reasonable quality and had few obstructions, except that:

- 1) BT utility works were underway which restricted the pavement to less than 1 metre at one point, and:
- 2) At the entrance to the Park Hotel, a roadworks sign and an advertising board ("A-board") was in the centre of the pavement in the walking desire line. This would be better placed close to the wall (picture 2)



1. GYTES STEPS



2. 'A-BOARD'

Continuing west, the pavement remained in good condition and sufficiently wide. However, there are sections of rough cobbled surfaces at vennels which will be a problem for some pedestrians (e.g. at County Hotel). Some pavement parking for loading purposes and motorbikes was seen. Bicycle parking was well-located on the carriageway (road).

It was observed that there were many people crossing the main road, dodging through traffic at places which are not designed for crossing (for example at the Mercat Cross).

At the west end of the High Street, at the corner with the Old Parish Church, the pavement splits into two levels (picture 3). The topography of this corner is complicated, but this feature will be a trip hazard to some people. Possibly tactile paving may be needed to warn visually impaired people of an unexpected step? Further discussion of this feature would be useful.

The roundabout at the junction of the B7062 is a major obstacle for people crossing all three of its arms. If it were possible to change this to a signalled junction, it would greatly increase safe crossing opportunities including for people with limited mobility, visual impairments etc.

### **Cuddy Bridge/Old Town/Neidpath Road**

Continuing north and west on the south side of the A72, the streets and pavements are narrower. Consequently, some 'A-boards' become more obstructive for pedestrians (notably at the Neidpath Inn, picture 4). The tactile paving at the Cocoa Black/Castle Warehouse crossing can be slippery when wet.



**3. HIGH ST SPLIT PAVEMENT**



**4. A-BOARDS**

It is noted that heavy industrial traffic is common on this road, which includes both a health centre and a school. Bollards have been deemed necessary to avoid vehicles going on to the pavement in places. Nevertheless, a lorry parked on the pavement outside the Neidpath Inn was encountered, completely obstructing the pavement.

The health centre is a major destination, with limited parking on site and other 'overflow' parking on the other (north) side of the road. The route between this and the health centre may need to be looked at further. Blue Badge parking bays at the health centre are faded and would benefit from repainting. Wet leaves were found to be hazardous round the back of the health centre.

Returning towards town on the north side of the A72, there is a section of road with no pavement (next to the cemetery). There are no dropped kerbs across St Andrew's Road, and a very wide 'bellmouth' junction, not appropriate for a 20mph street.

There was some infringement of the pavement from parked cars; outside JRD Motors, multiple vehicles were parked on the pavement (picture 5). Pavements on Young Street to the north were noted as narrow, with bins causing obstructions. The pavements and road surface on Biggiesknowe were found to be in poor condition.

## High Street (north side, heading east)

Returning to the High Street, pavements were again seen to be in quite good condition and sufficiently wide. There is some 'pavement clutter' through A-boards, cafe tables and chairs, and goods for sale, but generally these are well aligned next to the building line and so don't appear to cause much of an obstruction (picture 6).



**5. PAVEMENT PARKING**



**6. HIGH ST 'CLUTTER'**

There are no facilities (seats, shelter etc) at the 'town service' bus stop near Bank of Scotland. It also does not appear to be protected from parking in any way and was entirely parked on. A 'bus boarder', extending the pavement into the road, should be considered



**7. BUS STOP**

(picture 7).

Although there are two uncontrolled crossings on the western section of the High Street, the pedestrian crossing between Greggs and the Gift Box (picture 8) is the only signalled crossing on the whole of the A72 in Peebles town centre. This is therefore the only safe place that a blind person can cross the High Street with confidence. The junction with Northgate has tactile paving on only the east side; this should be matched with similar on the western pavement (picture 9).



**8. HIGH ST CROSSING**



**9. NORTHGATE**

Continuing East back to the Gytes, the roundabout at the Edinburgh Road junction is another difficult road crossing for pedestrians, especially if they need time to cross and especially crossing the westbound lane towards town which carries a lot of traffic, much of it quite fast.

### 3. Conclusions

There are both good and less good aspects to the streets covered: Innerleithen Road (westernmost section), Eastgate, High Street, Cuddy Bridge, Old Town and Neidpath Road (easternmost section).

Overall, the town centre seems very traffic dominated, with lots of parked cars and it is questionable whether such a busy high street should ever return to a speed limit of 30mph. However, it is a basically attractive pedestrian space, with a large space from building line to building line, with mostly wide pavements in quite good condition.

#### Chief good aspects of the street:

- generally good quality pavement;
- most pavement wide enough;
- bus shelters at most places.

#### Chief poor aspects of the streets:

- dominated by traffic;
- very limited options to cross the main road;
- roundabout at Peebles Old Parish Church a major problem.

#### Potential 'quick wins':

- clean up steps and extend handrail at Gytes access;
- tidying up of 'A-boards' to encourage shops to keep all adjacent to the building line;
- install tactile paving on western pavement of Northgate at junction with High Street;
- re-paint Blue Badge spaces at Hay Lodge Health Centre;
- protect bus stops with no 'stopping' orders.

#### More strategic issues to consider:

- investigate the possibility of replacing the roundabout at the Old Parish Church (junction of B7062/A72) with traffic lights, giving protected ('green man') crossing across all three arms;
- at the same location, also consider options for the 'stepped pavement' (picture3);
- install at least two more signalled crossings (e.g. at Old Parish Church, and at eastern end of High Street);
- review parking enforcement strategy - especially with a ban on pavement and double parking coming into effect soon as part of the Transport Act (Scotland) 2019;
- review access to bus stops, especially identifying if more stops need protection from parking (e.g. at the 'town service' stop noted above on the High Street).

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